

THE GREAT
D U T Y
OF
CONTENTMENT
AND
RESIGNATION
TO THE
W I L L of G O D,
RECOMMENDED.

Shewing the Ways and Means how to attain such
a Temper of Mind as will make us happy in
the worst Circumstances we may possibly fall
into.

B E I N G

The Substance of Four SERMONS Preached first at *Hoxton*
Chapel, and afterwards in the Parish Church of *St. Mar-*
garet's, Lothbury.

To which are added,

Select Forms of PRAYERS proper for private Families, and
particular Persons, extracted from the Liturgy of the Church
of *England*, and other Books of Devotion.

By T H O M A S S M I T H,

One of the Curates of *St. Andrew, Holborn.*

The Second EDITION, corrected and enlarged by the AUTHOR.

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THE GREAT

DUTY

OF

CONTEMPORARY

AND

RESIGNATION

TO THE

WILL OF GOD

RECOMMENDED

THESE THINGS BEING THE MOST IMPORTANT
AND NECESSARY FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS
COUNTRY TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND

AND

THEY ARE HEREBY RECOMMENDED
TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY
BY THE BOARD OF CENSORS

AND BY THE BOARD OF CENSORS
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND
SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINE

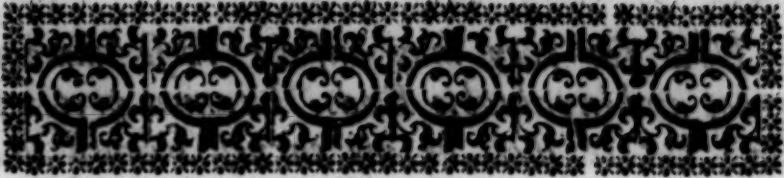
BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND

SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINE

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P R E F A C E.



Do not publish these plain Discourses, as if I thought them to excel, or even so much as to equal those which have already been published on the same Subject. On the contrary, I always looked upon them in such an inferior Light, that I could not be prevailed on, though often assured by my Friends, who heard them from the Pulpit, that they were well approved of, and greatly desired to be made public, till I had shewn them to a Reverend Person, who, in the Opinion of judicious Men, is a Man of great Probity and undissembled Piety, good Sense, and true Learning, and on whose Judgment I intirely relied.

This worthy Person, after he had with great Attention heard them read, affirmed, that the Matter contained in them was good, and if communicated to the World they might, through the Divine Blessing, be not only a Means to promote the present Interest and truest Happiness of Mankind, but also their future Glory and final Felicity.

How

How far they may answer these immensely great and invaluable Ends, I cannot pretend to say; but it shall be my earnest Request to the Fountain of Life, that they may have this good Effect on the Hearts of all that read them, and likewise, that they may be instrumental in establishing real Goodness, instead of the Appearance of it; and fixing in the Mind the Power of Godliness, instead of the Form thereof.

When the Minds of Men are thus happily influenced; they will not lay hold of a few visionary Notions, nor rest satisfied with an imaginary Scheme of Things; which may serve to fill the Head, but can never reform the Heart. For true Religion terminates in Action, in transcribing the great Original of Purity in our Lives and Conversations. And the Kingdom of God consists not in the Observance of external Rites, or superficial Performances, but in Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost. He that does not these Things so serves Christ that he is both acceptable to God and profitable to Men.

*Real Religion is seated in the Heart, is discovered by a regular and circumspect Behaviour, and a constant Conformity to all the Precepts of the Gospel, this brings Men to hearken to the moving Voice of undefiled Reason, and to obey the unerring Dictates thereof, till by degrees they are so charm'd with this heavenly Principle, and so delighted with the Practice of Virtue that they can find no true Felicity but in the Discharge of those immutable Laws of Justice
and*

and Equity, and the Use of such Means as act in Conjunction with our rational Faculties, and are designed to advance us in real Piety and Goodness. For Holiness is the Beauty of the Soul, the highest Prerogative of reasonable Beings. It is the Perfection of the Deity. The Employment of Angels, and will be the Exercise of glorified Spirits during the several Stages of their eternal Existence.

Unless Men feel the Force of Truth in subduing the turbulent Motions of the sensitive Appetites; restraining their precipitant Wills, and conquering their vicious Affections, we shall never be able to master those vile Passions, nor get the Victory over our brutish Lusts, which are always ready to disquiet and enslave us, and keep our Minds in such a State of spiritual Bondage as will obstruct our Endeavours after true Liberty, and retard us from entering into his Service which is perfect Freedom.

Let these Considerations be Motives for us to remove every Impediment out of the Way that may hinder us from discharging our Duty faithfully; for then we shall neither feel much Interruption from within, nor meet with much Opposition from without; but our Souls will be animated with Courage, and inspired with Activity, and we shall be able to go on in the Paths of Virtue, with Chearfulness and Delight, by means of which our Senses will be exercised on the great End and ultimate Design of all our Actions, which is the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Men. Likewise we shall be brought

to acknowledge that the eternal Source of all Things is God. That we owe our very Being to his Almighty Power, and our Subsistence to his good Providence. That we are the Work of his Hands, and our Preservation must be ascribed to his diffusive Goodness and overflowing Beneficence. That we are frail sinful Creatures, whose Dependance is entirely upon him for whatsoever we enjoy in this Life, or hope for in the next. Therefore universal Submission and Obedience is due to him as the Origin of all, and we must glorify God in our Bodies and our Spirits, which are his.

The firm Belief of a wise and just Providence that governs the World, join'd with a suitable Behaviour cannot fail of influencing our Lives in so powerful a Manner, as to preserve a calm and humble Disposition of Spirit before God; and make us capable of maintaining a serene and equal Temper throughout our Deportment towards Men. This Faith will not only make us patiently submit to the divine Pleasure, but also create Joy, when in and under the sharpest Tribulation.

*To whomsoever these Discourses shall be thus blessed, they will feel the Efficacy of true Religion on their Hearts, and they will be brought to have such a Delight in the Practice of * Holiness,*

* When I speak of Holiness, I do not mean a bare Compliance with the external Part of Religion, but a real Conformity to the moral Perfections of God, as far as Creatures are capable of imitating their Creator; for without that we cannot obtain true Happiness.

liness, that their Minds will be daily improving in moral Endowments, and their Souls will be purified and gradually prepared for a Dwelling among Saints and Angels in the bright Regions of Glory and never-fading Pleasures.

This Reader is the hearty Prayer of him, who earnestly desires thy Deliverance from the ruling Power of Sin, that thou mayest be free to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things. Then shall we walk conformable to the Injunctions of that unchangeable Law, which is in all Respects adapted to the Nature of every individual, and so suited to the various Circumstances of each, that whoever shall persevere in a diligent Performance of its Precept, shall meet with the divine Approbation here, be enrolled in the Book of Life, and have his Name recorded in the Annals of Futurity. If we are thus successful in our Petitions to Heaven, we shall commence Citizens of a Kingdom where unmix'd Pleasures never cease, and unmingled Felicity knows no Period; the comfortable Assurance of which, will wonderfully support our fainting Spirits when we are about to leave this gloomy Seat, and greatly revive us at the Time we are putting off this Tenement of Clay; for then we shall exchange this known Valley of Tears for the peaceable Regions of Joy; there to be fix'd in a Mansion of everlasting Rest; where immortal Spirits are cloath'd with the bright Robes of spotless Purity, and encircled with the resplendent Rays of eternal Glory, thro'
the

the all-atoning Blood of our crucified Saviour and Redeemer.

May that incomprehensible Being which fills Heaven and Earth with his Presence, fill our Hearts with his Love, and cause in us an utter Abhorrence of all Sin; Work in us an Admiration of the Excellency of his moral Government, and make us so to delight in practising the Laws thereof, that in Consequence of such a Conduct, we may with the divine Assistance be able to hold up our Heads with Joy; and tho' for the present we are oppress'd with Straits and Darkness, yet, let us wait with humble Patience on him who is good beyond our Conceptions, till we arrive at the Kingdom of Light, where the Secrets of Providence shall be unfolded to our then more enlarg'd Capacities; and the Wonders of redeeming Mercy justly displayed in fixing us in a State of eternal Felicity, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Speedily will be published,

By the same AUTHOR,

A Discourse shewing the agreement between Natural and Revealed Religion; wherein will be proved, the impossibility of being a real Friend to true Natural Religion, and at the same Time an Enemy to genuine Revealed Religion.

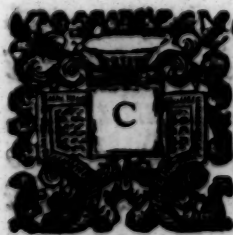
The



The great Duty of Contentment
and Resignation to the Will of
God recommended, &c.

PHIL. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatsoever State I am, there-
with to be content.*



Contentment in every Circumstance of Life is a hard Lesson, and a great while in Learning; for it not only requires a steady composed Temper of Mind in our present Condition, but there must be an humble Disposition of Soul mixed with Patience, and a Kind of Chearfulness and free Submission, with a Will resigned to the Will of God; and to whatsoever may befall us in the Course of his Providence for the future. In affliction, or want, in distress or persecution, under the most pressing evils, as well as the greatest good: In a word, hard as this lesson really is. and truly difficult as it appears to be;

B

yet

yet it must be learned, before we can have any tolerable comfort in this life; or inclination to prepare for the next: for so long as our minds are restless or dissatisfied, we are unfit to approach the throne of grace; and intirely unqualified for the everlasting enjoyment of God's glorious presence, in the calm and peaceable regions above.

Therefore let us endeavour to remove every Obstruction out of the Way, that may hinder us from learning this important Lesson, and not suffer either murmuring or repining to invade our Breasts; lest those bitter Enemies of our Peace should get the Advantage of, and destroy us: but if we would be successful in our Attempts against such disquieting Adversaries, let us go immediately to the Mercy-seat, and there earnestly implore the Aids of the divine Spirit to assist us in subduing them. For whenever the Father of mercies is pleased to grant us our requests, we shall then be able to go forward without interruption, in learning this most comfortable lesson; and not to give over till our hearts can speak the apostle's language, and we can truly say, *we have learned in whatsoever state we are in, to be therewith content. For I know, says he, how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need: I can do all things thro' Christ who strengthneth me.* That is, he could not only learn that lesson, but this, or any other which God should require of him, through the Assistance of Christ, by whom alone he had been enabled to learn that mentioned in the text, in whatsoever state he was in to be therewith content.

And now I shall, with the divine assistance, begin to give a more particular account of this lesson

son of contentment, and for the doing of which I shall take the following method :

- I. Shew what contentment is.
- II. By what means it may be attained.
- III. Lay before you the happiness of him who is possessed of it.
- IV. And Lastly, Make such observations on the advantages that do accrue to us by learning this important lesson, as may have a proper tendency to quicken our endeavours after it. And so conclude.

I. I propose to shew what contentment is.

Contentment is not only an equal temper of mind in our present condition, but also a free submissive temper of soul, ready to bear with patience and humility, resignation, and a chearful compliance, in whatsoever state or condition God in his providence shall be pleased to place us for the future ; whether painful or laborious, unsuccessful or necessitous, without any inward resentment or making any dishonourable reflections on the justice and goodness of the divine Disposer : so that let his station in life be ever so disagreeable to his nature, or ungrateful to his disposition, he will not be displeased with it.

He who has such a virtuous turn of mind, will rest contented under every dispensation of God's providence ; will own his goodness, and acknowledge his wisdom in the administration of it ; in adversity, as well as prosperity ; for if he is deprived of what he wants, and loses what he has, he will commit himself and his affairs to the will of the Almighty ; whose goodness he is assured of, and whose justice he does not doubt of : if he suffer in person, estate, or good name, it is no
more

more than what he expects ; and therefore patiently bears with it, and rests contented. If he should be reduced from the highest pitch of affluence to the lowest situation in life, or suffer by designing men who lay in wait to deceive him, he will make no other reflection than this, *That the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord :* or, with good old *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.*

Again, if he should be afflicted with any great calamity, and be treated with disdain, he will not be discomposed ; or meet with contempt, he will not be provoked. If enemies insult him, or friends forsake him ; or pain and sickness be growing upon him ; or if, instead of compassion and assistance, he is upbraided and ridiculed ; he will patiently submit to the will of his heavenly Chastiser. Moreover, If among his adversaries there is one which has the greatest interest in his afflictions, and who ought to throw a vail over his infirmities, should prove guilty of the vilest treachery and basest falshood towards him ; all other afflictions, but this last mentioned, comparatively speaking, touch only his body, but this wounds his very soul ; still he can bear himself up with such a steady and humble temper of mind not to deviate from the laws of reason ; but will with the powerful help of divine grace be always found in the constant practice of his duty, and so entirely resigned to the will of God, with humility and dependence, as truly to say with *Job*, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ; he also shall be my salvation : For a hypocrite shall not come before him,* *Job. xiii. 15, 16.* Nothing shall make him cast off his faith and hope in his God ; being well assured that all shall be made up to him again either here or hereafter. This the royal *Psalmist* has given

us full assurance of, *Psalms xxvii. 13. For I had fainted, says he, unless I had believed, to see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the living. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.*

In all afflictions the truly pious soul will look up to his God; and will with patience and resignation wait the issue of his providence, from the consideration of the manifold mercies and favours which he has already received, and the many evils which he must have suffered, if the kind Parent of the universe, the indulgent Father of spirits, had not interposed for his preservation; which will greatly revive his dejected mind, and wonderfully support his sinking spirit; and therefore in times of the greatest distress, he will reason as *Job* did, *Shall we receive good from the hand of God, and not receive evil?*

In a word; Whatsoever troubles or afflictions befall the good man in this life, sensible he is, that sin is the original cause of all, and that *afflictions spring not out of the dust*, but are ordered by the wise disposer of all things, to cure the wounds which sin has made; and to do that work for him which he could not do for himself, by reason of the depravity of his nature. Which things, joined with the many advantages he receives when afflictions have their proper influence upon him; as the mortification of his lust, the restraining his passions, which before he had indulged, and making them to act in due subordination to his reason; also the gaining a knowledge of himself, as far as he is able, and getting the victory over his inordinate desires and corrupt affections, is a much nobler conquest than was ever gained by the mightiest monarch, or greatest hero: for the conquest which they made was only a temporal one;

one; and that which they gained, was but the addition of some little spot of earth to that which they were before possessed of; or some title of honour; both which could continue no longer, at farthest, than this frail and perishable life.

But to the patient and contented man, afflictions are of infinitely greater advantage; for they take his mind off from earthly things; and fix it more steadfastly on heavenly things; which gives him that solid peace, satisfaction, and comfort, which the world with all its gay and glittering pomp cannot afford him. And the regulating his passions, he esteems one of the best means to bring him to an acquaintance with his Maker, and the gaining him an inheritance in that kingdom, which cannot decay with time, but will hold out through all the numberless ages of eternity. So that here is matter of joy and comfort to him, but no just cause for discontent or impatience.

For every truly humble soul is under the guidance and protection of God Almighty, who will preserve him from every thing that may be detrimental or hurtful to his spiritual and eternal good; therefore, he looks upon the sufferings of this present life as not worthy to be compared with that glory which shall be revealed in him; and that afflictions are but light things, that is, light when compared with that everlasting happiness they are the means to procure; and though for the present they are grievous, yet they are but for a moment; and will work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: *For as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, so neither has it entered the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

A truly good man has such a sense of the Deity's superintendent goodness on his mind, as will cause him always gratefully to acknowledge, that
his

his constant preservation is wholly to be ascribed to the power and benignity of the Almighty. This makes him secretly to adore the divine munificence for the provision which he has so liberally made for, and generously bestowed upon him, that he cannot entertain any hard thoughts of providence, nor harbour in his breast any unworthy notions of God's justice. The remembrance of his former dealings with him in his deliverance out of numberless dangers and evils which he could neither foresee nor prevent, will afford his mind inexpressible satisfaction, and cause him to justify the conduct of that Being who weighs our spirits in a ballance, and disposes all things with the most consummate wisdom and impartial distribution.

Likewise, the many present blessings that he enjoys joined with the hopes of possessing all those future mercies and undeserved favours which he could neither expect nor claim any right to, but as the free gift of heaven, and effects of that love which this infinite, all-wise, and good Being bears to him and all his creatures; will support him under the severest trials, and carry him through the heaviest of all God's dispensations, with a degree of cheerfulness and comfort.

These things, the humble and contented mind meditates on, and looks up with joy to the transcendent Majesty of God, who is a Being of infinite goodness as well as power, and in whom all perfections shine in their brightest and undiminished lustre; a Being, from whom he receives all he has, and all that he can have; a Being, which if he is careful to imitate in all his moral perfections, as far as his nature is capable, and copy after this divine original according to his measure: he is assured that God will not do any thing that has a tendency to make him unhappy; nor be the cause of making any of his creatures miserable. There-
fore

us persevere in well-doing; and endeavour all our actions may be agreeable to and content with those eternal rules of righteousness, laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ in his word; and then, whatsoever evils may happen to us in this life, there is nothing that can either harm or injure us: for let what will befall us here, all will be made a means to prepare our souls for a much better and more durable state hereafter.

By making proper reflections on the advantages we receive from afflictions, and the discoveries we may make of the benevolent purposes of the divine nature, and all its awful and adorable excellencies and perfections, from reason and revelation; it will be impossible to discern any thing that is done by so gracious and lovely a Being as God; who is full of goodness, and every thing that is amiable and delightful, but what tends to the perfecting our happiness, and the securing our present and final felicity. The contented man is satisfied, that if men would but put themselves upon a strict and impartial enquiry, and examine into their own ways; they would soon find, that all the calamities and sufferings of this present life, are but punishments justly due to them for their offences; and therefore they can have no reason to complain or murmur against the severity of providence. The chastisements which our heavenly parent makes use of, are wisely calculated for restraining us from the commission of vice and improving us in the practice of virtue, that we may be delighted with the beauty of true goodness, and charmed with the excellency of the christian morality.

They are not intended by the Father of mercies purely to torment and vex us, but they are designed to promote our spiritual and eternal felicity. Nay we are assured by the word of truth, that

that God has the most tender and compassionate regard for all his creatures ; that he delights to do them good, and is not willing to afflict or grieve the children of men ; but corrects us for our profit, that we may be made partakers of his holiness, and that in the end all things shall work together for good to them that love God.

Afflictions preserve in the good christian's mind, such an awful sense of the divine power and goodness, that they make him truly sensible he is but a poor dependent Being, intirely under the conduct, and wholly under the care of an infinitely superior one : one that knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust ; and therefore will not forsake the work of his hands, but watch over us for good ; will not omit any means that may advance or further it.

The truly contented mind is perfectly satisfied, that the God of consolation has not been wanting in giving sufficient proof of his love to mankind, and that he really designs to make us everlastingly happy, that amazing instance of it in sending his own Son to die for us, and to accept of his death as a sacrifice and satisfaction for our sins ; so that every true believer in Christ Jesus, may justly take up the apostle's reasoning, and say, *He that spared not his own son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things ?* that is, let us now doubt if we can of his kind intentions toward us, since he hath not withheld his own Son, but delivered him up to death for our sakes ; a mercy so great in itself, and the effects of it so boundless and stupendous, that angels cannot comprehend the fulness of it.

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our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the world. We cannot reasonably suppose or think, that God will deny us any thing that is necessary to our true happiness, nor bestow any thing upon us, but what will incline us to seek after it, and be a means to prepare our souls for a blessed immortality in the bright and glorious realms of futurity.

And though it must be owned, that many virtuous heathens have endured very great sufferings with wonderful fortitude and courage; yet none have ever bore them with such patience and resignation as the disciples of the meek and holy Jesus; nor have any but they, such a real and solid foundation for comfort and satisfaction. For they have the most convincing light and clearest evidence, as well as the greatest reason to believe, that the same Jesus that died for their sins, is also risen again for their justification, and is now seated at the right hand of the glorious majesty of God, making intercession for all his faithful servants; that where he is there they may be also.

This is that which raises their souls above all inferior considerations, and possesses their minds with so deep a sense of God's love, that they are so far from arraigning his providence, that they will not make the least unbecoming reflections on his justice, nor on any of his other attributes. And although their condition may be very perplexing, and their state so very calamitous, as to make them afraid, and they may have such a passionate sense of their sufferings, as may cause them to break out into that moving language which afflicted nature teaches; yet they will not impeach the equity of providence, nor attempt to lessen his goodness who has often turned their greatest evils into good, and made their most grievous afflictions

afflictions a means of conveying to them the best of blessings.

This is that which silences all their clamours, and makes them to have such a profound veneration for the wisdom of their Creator, that they will for ever admire it. This will cause them to adore his goodness, and magnify his justice, in sending afflictions to correct their mistakes and daily failings; which otherwise they might have been too apt to pass by as not worth regarding. Therefore they are not uneasy at them, nor impatient under them, however they may thwart their natural inclinations or worldly advantages; they will neither murmur nor complain against God, but will rest satisfied with every thing that he does, being well assured that whatever is done by so all-wise and good a Being as God is, must be for the best.

And for our farther comfort under the various troubles and calamities which we meet with in this life; we may learn from God's own word, that nothing can befall us but what is from the immediate hand of God, or by his permission; and that he will not send any thing to us, but what has a tendency to secure our happiness in this life, and prevent our misery in the next, if we study to approve ourselves to him in righteousness and true holiness.

The consideration of these things will make every good man's behaviour under trouble composed, his countenance serene, his mind so quiet and calm, that he will suffer no tumultuous passions to crowd in-upon him, nor permit any disorders to interrupt the tranquillity of his soul; but is always bearing in mind the wise ends and designs of providence, and the kind intentions of his heavenly Father, in sending afflictions which are designed to wean him from the love of this present

present evil world, and to take him off from placing his affections on any of its transitory enjoyments.

By this means, the mind becomes fixt on more noble and lasting objects, which will cause it fully to discover the emptiness and insufficiency of all things here below, for affording the soul any real satisfaction, and the impossibility of every thing that is of a mortal nature, to satisfy the large and capacious desires of that which is immortal. No, the whole circle of human pleasures will not alleviate the troubles of the mind, nor give one moment's ease to a soul in distress. Nothing but God, and communion with him, can give the soul that sound peace, satisfaction, and contentment, it is in the pursuit of.

The things of the world promise fair, but prove deceitful ; they captivate us first with their charms, and bring us to acquiesce with their ensnaring insinuations, cause us to yield to their unprofitable amusements ; make us so eagerly to pursue their insatiable diversions, that at length we become weary of following the painful and disquieting chase ; and then instead of affording us assistance they fly away and leave us in great perplexity ; but God will not deceive us ; he will abide by us, and we may rejoice in his holy comforts. God will give us every thing that is good for us, and fill the craving desires of our minds with substantial pleasure and solid satisfaction, which no created Being can deprive us of.

The mind of a truly contented Man has his desires so suited to his condition, that no future contingencies will make him uneasy ; for he has a never-failing spring of comfort that is peculiar to the righteous, and a pleasure which none but submissive souls ever enjoy. And though many good men may labour under great afflictions, yet,

yet, this virtuous disposition of mind will take off their keenness, and greatly abate their smart.

A good christian is so far from murmuring or being discontented under his affliction, that from the serious consideration of the many great advantages he has gained by them, they will raise in his soul thanksgiving and praise to the father of mercies, for his kind visitation ; and will with the devout *Psalmist* say, *That it was good for him that he had been afflicted ; for by them he had learnt God's law.*

By them we are often awakened out of the lethargy of sin, and brought to the Practice of our duty ; by them our souls are purified, and with the help of the divine spirit, are made fit for the heavenly state ; by them, we are put into the path which leads to the realms of light and blessedness, where neither murmuring nor discontent ever has, or ever will enter.

There is no condition in life, be it ever so severe, to a mind truly resigned to God, that will be any diminution to its true happiness, for he is fed with that hidden manna which our Saviour has promised to all those that overcome the world ; and refreshed with the inward comforts of divine grace. This makes him not only satisfied with his present condition, but his mind is prepared with contentment, to bear whatsoever adverse state God, in his good providence, shall be pleased to place him in for the future. Thus I have shewn what contentment is.

II. I am now in the *Second* place to shew, by what means we may obtain this happy temper of mind.

I. By Repentance towards God, which is a hearty sorrow for our sins past, with sincere desires, and holy resolutions of forsaking them, and
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persevering in our duty for the future. And by Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; trusting in him for the pardon of our offences, and the strengthening us with the aids of his grace, that we may be inabled to withstand the temptations of the devil, and to repel whatsoever evils he may throw in our way, to prevent our reliance on our Maker, and to obstruct our progress in all those christian graces and virtues, that tend to promote our inward peace and happiness.

2. By constant reading of the holy scriptures, joined with fervent Prayer offered up to God in the name and mediation of his blessed Son Christ Jesus, for the enlightning our minds, for a more perfect understanding of his sacred word, and influencing our wills by his holy Spirit, that we may not comply with the treacherous enticements of the world without, nor yield to the deceitful suggestions of our own hearts within; nor be hurried on to the commission of any evil, by the violence of any of our unruly passions; but let us trust in the Lord, and be doing good, and commit ourselves unto him, as unto a faithful Creator; for in his hands we are much safer than in our own.

3. By remembring to frequent the house of God; where we may join with the assemblies of his people in offering up our spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praises to the transcendent Majesty of heaven, in such a manner as becomes poor frail creatures to their great Creator; by owning our weaknesses, and acknowledging his power and goodness, and our dependence upon him for the supply of our wants, relief in our necessities, and supplies of his grace to inable us to bear with patience, resignation, and a ready compliance, whatsoever afflictive circumstances God, in his all-wise providence,

dence, shall be pleased to place us in for the time to come.

In the house of our God we may offer up our unfeigned praises and thanksgivings in the most solemn manner, to the God in whom *we live, move, and have our beings*; and who is the author of all the blessings we enjoy or hope for; and without whose upholding power we cannot subsist one moment; this is the God to whom we may present our sincere praises and thanksgivings for the mercies we have already received, and make our humble acknowledgements for the liberal provision he has made for us, and his constant care and watchfull providence over us; but above all, for that amazing and unparalleled regard which he has shown for our everlasting felicity in sending his beloved Son to declare his willingness to be reconciled to us, and his readiness to receive us into a state of favour with him; and the giving us sufficient grace for the sanctifying our natures, and perfecting the great work of our redemption.

In that holy place we may hear his word explained, and the duties of the Christian life enforced; there we may join with the faithful, and commemorate the Death and Passion of our dear Redeemer, and the inestimable benefits that do accrue to us thereby; by spiritually feeding our souls with the most precious body and blood of our crucified Lord and Saviour; all which duties, if performed with a deep sense of our vileness and unworthiness, and a just sense of God's goodness and free mercy, will be accepted by him as a grateful tribute of praise; and be a means of recommending us to the divine approbation.

3. By being frequent in the great and important duty of prayer, I mean that prayer which is offered up to God in secret, where no ear can hear us but his, nor no eye see us but that piercing eye

eye which penetrates the heart, pervades the mind, and beholds the most secret recesses and hidden springs thereof.

Now the soul that is thoroughly sensible of her wants, and inability to supply them; and that all things here below are of too fluctuating a nature to be depended upon, or ever trusted to, for the satisfying the desires of an immortal spirit, or affording any happiness that is proportionable to it; needs no argument, nor wants any motives to persuade her to apply to God for help, or petition the Almighty for his heavenly assistance.

If men were really affected with the weakness of human nature, and had a feeling sense of their dependence upon divine providence, joined with a consciousness of being unable to help themselves without his gracious aid, their own pressing necessities are sufficient inducement to make them not only agree to the reasonableness of this duty of prayer, but also to see the absolute necessity of it: and be glad of every opportunity to perform it. They would esteem it an unspeakable privilege, that such sinful creatures as we, who are a compound of dust and ashes, of flesh and spirit, may at any time have free recourse to so immensely great, glorious and good a Being as God; but much more inconceivably so, when they consider how tenderly they are called upon, and lovingly invited to come to him; and lay before him all their wants, acquaint him with all their sorrows, and unburden their souls before him, that they may meet with suitable relief and comfort under the heaviest load of afflictions, and even when every thing else turns against them.

And that we may the more clearly see the necessity of performing this weighty duty of prayer, let us take a view of the troubles man is subject to, with the many dangers and miseries to which
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he is frequently exposed. He is liable to many evils and miseries, which he can neither prevent nor redress. He is full of wants which he cannot supply, and compassed about with infirmities which he can never remove, and obnoxious to dangers which he can never sufficiently provide against. He is apt to grieve for what he cannot help, and eagerly to desire what he is never likely to obtain. *Man walketh in a vain shew, and disquieteth himself in vain:* He is surrounded with troubles, and in danger of being pressed down with the weight of adverse occurrences. Man is liable to many mischiefs, and continually exposed to misfortunes. Sometimes we shall see him labouring under some heavy calamity, scarce able to bear up his spirit: At other times we may behold him under great uneasiness of mind, and dejected with a load of sorrow. Friends probably will forsake him when he stands most in need of their assistance; and his enemies are very likely to add to the burden of his afflictions by triumphing over him; or he may be left in such bitterness of grief, that he knows not how to lift up his head, nor where to find any rest or comfort for his soul; and though these evils may not happen to every one, yet these and many more we are continually exposed to; and can have no security against them but from God.

Therefore the only means we possibly can make use of to escape those evils, or be supported under them, is frequent, humble, and earnest prayer to God, with a profound resignation of ourselves to him, leaving the event of our petitions to his good pleasure; that if it should not be his will to keep us from the miseries and distresses to which we are daily and hourly exposed, but should suffer us to fall into those many evils and calamities which we have too just reason to fear, he

would be pleased to strengthen our faith, that we may live in an entire dependance upon him, and never trust to any thing else for our preservation and protection; but may be always looking up to him, and pouring out our souls before him; that our minds may be fortified with divine grace, and our hearts prepared for every dispensation of his providence; and that we may be possessed with patience and contentment in the dark and gloomy season of adversity.

I have the longer insisted upon this duty of prayer, as firmly believing that there is not any thing that will contribute more to the inward peace and happiness of the mind, than the constant and regular performance of it; when it is joined with faith in the power, wisdom, and goodness of God. For it will not only procure us a degree of grace proportionable to the weight of our afflictions, which will cause us to look up to God with joy, in the certain expectation of that eternal life which he has promised to all who patiently wait for it; but it will also keep us in such an humble frame and temper of mind, as will dispose us in all our troubles to fly immediately, and in earnest to God for succour; and with submission and resignation to wait his good pleasure.

Likewise it will cherish and keep alive the seed of divine grace which God has planted in our souls, and enable us to maintain that spiritual communion that is between God and us, which will be infinitely more to our advantage and satisfaction in the cloudy day of distress and sorrow, than in all the transitory enjoyments of this perishable world.

Lastly, I would again recommend to you the reading the holy scriptures; which I look upon as a very great means for attaining this happy temper of mind, when it is joined with earnest prayer
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to God, that he would be pleased to accompany the reading of them with his holy spirit; that they may be engraven on our hearts, and their precepts may have their due force and proper influence on our minds; that we may be found in the constant practice of all those duties which they have enjoined, as the means necessary to our happiness here in this world, and to fit us for the everlasting enjoyment of God himself in the next. And that they may be effectual to those heavenly purposes; we must always make them the rule of our faith and manners, and assiduously apply ourselves to God, for the aids of his grace to confirm us more stedfastly in the belief of those great and precious promises, that are contained in them; and are made to all such as obey their divine instructions.

So that whenever we have recourse to the sacred pages, it may be for words of comfort to our souls, and directions how to behave with patience and contentment under all the troubles and evils that may befall us in this uncertain life: If we do so, then we may be truly said to use them for the purpose for which they are originally given us by God, and this word will be *a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our paths*; it will both direct and comfort us through this vale of misery, by giving us proper directions how we may, in a great measure, escape the evils in it; and afford us comfort, by assuring us, that God will support us under the greatest hardships and miseries that may befall us, in our passage through this dangerous state, to the haven of rest and happiness.

And were the duties which I have mentioned under this second head, sincerely and constantly practised, they would not only bring us to an acquaintance with ourselves, and to an impartial examination of our own ways; by which means we should learn that sin is the true cause of
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all our misery, but we should also discern the justice and equity of God's proceedings with the sons of men; and no longer complain of providence for punishing us for our iniquities far less than we deserve; or revile his administration in the government of the world, for withholding those things from us that he knows would be most hurtful to us. We should admire his patience in bearing with us after so many repeated and long provocations, when we are so worthy of punishment. We should adore and reverence him for bestowing those good things, on such rebellious creatures as we are, who are utterly undeserving of them.

And whatsoever punishment God Almighty may inflict on any of his creatures, it is not always to be looked upon as the effects of his anger, but much rather of his love; and that tender compassion which he bears to all the children of men, and more especially those that are in covenant with him; that is, those that are under his immediate care and protection, are become the objects of his love, and made heirs of the grace of life which is in Christ Jesus. These are they to whom he has promised that *all things shall work together for good*; and that he will *never leave them, nor forsake them*. And though their afflictions were great, yet the design that God had in chastising them, was to calm their unruly passions, that they might see the great evil of sin, discover the dangerous precipice of vice, and be the means of preserving them from a much more dreadful punishment hereafter.

Such an Idea of providence as this, and conforming our lives to the rules of the gospel, with a full trust and dependance on God, and a firm belief in him, as the sovereign Lord of the world, and supream Disposer of all events, and that his tender mercy is over all his works; with a well-grounded

grounded faith in his promises, will make us content in any state, submissive in every change, and obedient to all his commands.

Having now shewn what the means are by which we may attain this contentedness of mind; I am in the third place to speak of the happiness that will naturally follow all such persons as are indued with it.

III. In men there are such strong inclinations to happiness, that all who partake of the human nature, from the greatest Prince to the meanest slave, from the most knowing Philosopher to him who is the most void of understanding; every one has a thirst for felicity, and vehemently desires to come to a participation of it. Happiness is the enquiry of all intelligent beings, and they have such a living sense of the want thereof, that it puts them upon forming various schemes of action for the obtaining it.

But the misfortune is, men too often pursue the shadow or appearance of felicity with more ardour than they do that which is real and substantial. They by degrees alter the temper of their souls, and do so abandon rational delights for the false pleasures of sensuality, that their affections are wholly taken up with terrene objects; and their understanding is employ'd in gratifying the lower appetites: By which means earthly satisfactions prevail over spiritual and immortal joy; so that they are not likely to acquire true blessedness, nor ever come to the enjoyment of it.

No, Happiness is not to be found in any other path than that of meekness, humility, and self-denial; there we may be sure to meet with it, if we walk on in it to the end in righteousness and true holiness, and in the sincere practice of virtue and real religion: For the haughty and imperious man cannot attain it; the avaritious mind is utterly

terly unacquainted with it; and those that abound in wealth, and can command all the pleasures and enjoyments of the world, are very often greater strangers to it, than the meanest peasant: Nay, for the most part, there is more true happiness lodged in the breast of a mean shepherd, than is to be found in him that wields the scepter.

The voluptuous Epicure, makes his happiness to consist in the gratifying his lust, and indulging his ungovernable passions, and pleasing his sensual appetites; but this is the happiness of a beast, and not of a rational and intelligent being; for he that has nothing else to glory in but the gratification of his sinful lusts and passions, puts himself upon a level with the brute creation. In a word; Whatsoever pleasures or enjoyments the sensualists may boast of, they are no other than what are common to the brute, and so long as he retains so great an affection for sensuality, he must for ever remain a stranger to true Felicity. But we will suppose him in the possession of all the enjoyments that this world affords; they are at best but a round of insipid pleasures, or a dull repetition of the same thing over again. And, if we may believe the experience of one who had as great a share of them as any of the sons of men, and had been conversant with every scene of life, and filled the highest station in it; He pronounces them all but *vanity and vexation of spirit*.

And impossible it is that any sensual pleasures should be otherwise; for being mingled with so many bitter ingredients, they will cause a great deal of trouble and sorrow; but will never procure us that sound peace or satisfaction which we are in the pursuit of. And what is much worse, too great familiarity with them, will keep us from gaining an acquaintance with those more sublime and spiritual delights, which are the pleasures of
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the mind, and the glory of a reasonable creature; by which he is distinguished from the beasts that perish.

Seeing these things are so; and that happiness is not to be found in any sinful course; and that all such as are pleading for the cause of sensuality, are at the greatest distance from true felicity, and are never likely to come to the enjoyment of it; there are none but humble and contented minds that know what happiness is, or ever feel the pleasures of it; that is, none but such persons as have given up themselves to God, are obedient to his laws, subject to his will, directed by his wisdom; and are resolv'd, by the assistance of divine grace, to be governed by him, and wholly to depend upon him, for whatever they stand in need of. Patiently to endure, and contentedly to acquiesce in whatsoever his providence shall inflict, or however he may dispose of them for the future.

Minds thus resigned to God, are not only free from all distracting thoughts, which stretch and rack the minds of men; and all imaginary evils, which are very often as bad, if not worse than real ones; and from most of the troubles and anxieties of life, which perplex uneasy and discontented spirits. But there naturally follows serenity of mind, with inward peace, satisfaction, and happiness; together with secret pleasure and delight springing up in their hearts, which they prefer before all external enjoyments, though ever so gilded over.

This is the happiness that follows contentment; and a greater none can be possess of, while they continue on this side the grave. For what greater happiness can we desire to have, while we abide in this mortal state; which is subject to many changes, and liable to various alterations, than to have a mind equal to every condition; in prosperity

perity not to soar too high; in adversity not to sink too low; not to be exalted with a large fortune, nor depressed with a narrow one; but always to live as those who depend entirely upon God, who is the fountain and spring of happiness, and from whom we derive whatever portion we enjoy of true felicity.

The happiness which we receive from God, has such a divine power and energy attending it, that it will in a great measure clear the mind of all those disorderly agitations of the passions, which will interrupt its tranquility, and disturb that repose and confidence it places in God, and that firm reliance on him, for whatsoever blessings we enjoy. It will likewise take us off from that anxiousness after what we have not, and probably what we are never likely to have; and bring us to the comfortable enjoyment of such things as we are in the possession of.

This happiness has such a transcendent greatness in it, that will raise our souls above the fading and fleeting enjoyments of this changeable world, and bring us from earth to heaven; to a devout attendance upon God, who is a perpetual source of happiness; and to the contemplation of such bright and glorious objects, as we shall be happy in the enjoyment to all eternity.

This joy and happiness is so incomparably great and excellent, that it is not to be found among any of the creatures, but only in the Creator, *who is God over all, blessed for evermore.* And he is the Author of all the happiness created Beings enjoy: And the manner in which it is received by them, is by communication from him, and though it is conveyed secretly into their souls, yet it springs from an inexhaustable fountain, that will be in them *a well of water springing up into eternal life.*

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This happiness is quite different from that of the world; which is short and transitory, uncertain and precarious, gross and unsatisfactory; a circle of giddy fluctuating transports, of mean contemptible things, when compared with that eternal peace and comfort which comes from God; who is the source of happiness and center of rest, the stay and support of the whole creation.

The happiness which springs from God is permanent and lasting, and will remain with us when we stand in need of it; when lying on the bed of sickness, it will revive and cheer our languishing spirits; it will abide by us when on the verge of life; and support and comfort us when in, and under the agonies of death. It will accompany our naked spirits into the other world, into new and surprising realms of light and blessedness, and continue with us when our souls shall stand before the throne of God, waiting for the perfecting our happiness, and consummating our joy, in the reviving presence of the ever glorious God, and with the blessed Jesus, who is the *mediator of a new covenant*; and with the august *assembly of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect*.

This is that joy and happiness which is the effect of contentment, or of one who places all his trust and confidence in God, and is satisfied with that provision which is made for him by the kind hand of providence; and though sometimes it may be very sparing and small, yet he has that always within him which is infinitely more valuable and of greater comfort to him, than any outward circumstances can possibly make him, were they ever so prosperous and flourishing: For he has the inward consolation of the spirit of peace, and feels within himself the secret and ineffable joys of the Holy Ghost; by which he is made truly sensible that the ways of God are *ways of pleasant-*

ness, and that *all his paths are peace*. And though he were stripped of all external enjoyments, or deprived of all outward felicity, yet he *possesses all things*, as the apostle speaks; that is, he is possessor of the true and substantial riches, the riches of the mind, and his soul is cloathed with all the beautiful and charming graces and virtues of the christian life; that is, innocency, integrity, real goodness, and true piety, with a hope full of a blessed immortality.

And till men become thus inwardly affected with the ways of God, and make his services their chief delight and pleasure; they may talk of pleasures, and enjoyments, as an excellent Prelate of our church says, “ but no man ever truly
“ found them, till he became acquainted with
“ God, and was made sensible of his love, and
“ partaker of his spiritual favour; and lived in
“ an entire friendship and communion with
“ him.”

A pious author, speaking of the blessedness of those souls who maintain communion with God, by acts of virtue and religion, says, “ How hap-
“ is an intelligent Being, who by prayer and me-
“ titation, by virtue and good works, opens this
“ communication between God and his own soul?
“ Though the whole creation frowns upon him,
“ and all nature looks black about him, he has
“ his lights and supports within him; that are
“ able to cheer his mind, and bear him up in the
“ midst of all those horrors which encompass him.
“ He knows that his helper is at hand, and is al-
“ ways nearer to him than any thing else can be,
“ which is capable of terrifying or annoying
“ him: In the midst of calumny or contempt he
“ attends to that Being who whispers better
“ things within his soul, and whom he looks
“ upon as his defender, his glory, and the lifter
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“ up of his head. In his deepest solitude and
 “ retirement, he knows that he is in company
 “ with the greatest of Beings, and perceives
 “ within himself such real sensations of his pre-
 “ sence, as are more delightful than any thing
 “ that can be met with in the conversation of his
 “ creatures. Even in the hour of death, he con-
 “ siders the pains of his dissolution to be nothing
 “ else but the breaking down of that partition
 “ which stands betwixt his soul, and the light of
 “ that Being, who is always present with him,
 “ and is about to manifest itself to him in ful-
 “ ness of joy.”

If we would be thus happy, we must take great heed that we do not separate ourselves from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, by fixing our minds on any thing here below, and seeking for true happiness in any other ways or means than those that are appointed by him.

But if we would continue in his favour, we must resign ourselves to him, and persevere in well-doing; we must make the practice of virtue and true religion our greatest delight, and never propose any real happiness to ourselves, but what we derive from thence; nor look for any sound peace or durable joy, but what we receive from the sweet and comfortable influences of divine grace, and a participation of the divine nature; that is, from a likeness to God, and a conformity to him in holiness, who is a most pure and perfect Being.

If we do so, then shall we experience the happiness which God is the author of; a happiness that is transcendently great and glorious, and as far excels all the pleasures and enjoyments of this lower world, as the light of the sun, when shining in his meridian brightness, does that of the moon: so that the soul, when it has once tasted of celestial

lestial pleasures, and is made truly sensible of their real worth and excellency, before it can be prevailed on to part with them, must offer the greatest violence to its reason, do *despite to the spirit of grace*, and cause a most bitter conflict in the inward man; which will greatly endanger its everlasting felicity; and this it is determined not to do, nor run the hazard of, for the sake of any of the glittering, but perishable enjoyments of this uncertain life.

And though the humble mind may meet with many discouragements from persevering in his duty, and have many temptations thrown in his way to draw him from it: Many specious and plausible pretences offered to keep him from adhering to it, by designing and wicked men; yet he is resolved, by the assistance of that divine Spirit which he has always had most experience of in times of difficulty and trouble, never to depart from it; but will rest content in any state, be satisfied with any condition, that providence shall appoint for him, so that he may be enabled to keep that peace of mind, and retain that joy in heart, which the world cannot give, nor, with all its deluding charms and paltry amusements, can ever take from him.

I have shewn what that happiness is which follows contentment, and that none can be truly happy but such as are possessors of it. I am now, in the *fourth* place, to make such observations on the advantages that do accrue to us, by learning this most comfortable lesson, as may tend to quicken our endeavours after it; and so conclude.

IV. But before I proceed, it will be necessary to advise you, never to think of attaining such an heavenly disposition of mind, as the greatest contrarieties of events cannot alter; nor ever to expect

fect that sweetness of disposition, the beauty of which no circumstances of distress can deface, without being fully resolved to withdraw your affections from the world, and wholly to confide in God; and intirely to depend upon him for whatsoever you want or stand in need of. Neither are we to expect that peace of mind and joy in heart, which surpasses all the understandings of men, without the sincere practice of virtue and true goodness. For the nearer we approach to God in the imitation of all his moral perfections, the more we shall be like him in the inward frame and disposition of our souls.

Likewise, we must take great heed that we are not too swift in motion after the things of the world, lest we become too warmly affected with them, or too much heated by them; for the more powerfully they strike our senses, the harder it will be to be drawn from them; and the closer our affections are united to the creature, the greater will be our distance from our Creator.

We must remember, that whoever is in friendship with the World, is at enmity with God; and that he who is an enemy to the world, is a friend to God and his own eternal happiness. If we would but seriously consider of these things, we should see great reason to loosen our affections from the world, and wholly to quit the pleasures and enjoyments of it. We should no longer suffer ourselves to be imposed upon by such things as will serve only to torment and vex us; things that will weary us in our pursuit after them, but will never afford us that sound rest or solid peace which they promised us in the possession of them; but will very often leave us in a much worse condition than we were in before we had any acquaintance with them, and sometimes they leave a lasting and most bitter sting behind them.

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If we would be partakers of that inward satisfaction, and settled temper of soul, which will make us happy in any circumstances, we must lay a restraint upon our inordinate lusts and passions, and bring them to act in a regular subjection to our reason: By doing so, these disturbers of our peace, and wounders of our consciences, will be in a great measure suppressed; and we shall be more at leisure and better disposed for the service of God and Religion; and our hearts more at liberty, and freer for acts of virtue and goodness; more ready to attend to any means that is most likely to obtain that happiness which will endure for ever. For the happiness which terminates with time, is not the happiness of spirits-fitted for eternity; and therefore not worth our striving for.

If we would have nothing to obstruct or hinder us, from closing with those means that have a tendency to quicken our endeavours after real happiness, we must keep our minds clear of all filthy images, and give no entertainment to evil imaginations, nor wicked desires; we must purify the heart, that fountain of corruption, from whence those impure streams flow. And though we are not sufficient of ourselves for this great work, yet if we make the strongest efforts we are able, God will not be wanting to co-operate with us, that we may be capable of cleansing our hearts, subduing our lusts, conquering our passions, and clearing our minds of all evil imaginations and wicked desires. And if we persevere in our duty, we shall be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and sin shall not get the dominion over us: For *the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin*, will be applied to our souls, and will effectually wash them from the pollution of it.

And if you would succeed in the performance of this great work, on which depends your present happiness, and future felicity ; let me advise you not to begin it in your own strength but first earnestly, and in a self-diffident manner, address yourselves in prayer to God, who is a never-failing fountain of goodness, that you may obtain such communications of his grace, and the powerful help of his divine Spirit, as will produce in your minds great humility, resignation, and a full trust and confidence in his mercy ; a firm belief in the Saviour of the world, and a thorough resolution to obey his laws ; without which you will never be able to rectify the heart, which is the source of disorders ; nor will that settled peace and tranquility of soul be ever attained by you. Therefore let us not begin God's work with the arm of flesh nor offer to go forward in it in our own strength ; for if we do, all our endeavours, without his gracious assistance, will ever prove fruitless and abortive.

I thought it necessary, before I entred on my last head of discourse, to caution you against the vanities of the world, and the impossibility of obtaining true peace of mind, while we depend on things below. For unless we are convinced of the danger and unhappiness there is in trusting to the things of this life, we shall never be perswaded to rely intirely upon God, from whom alone cometh real joy and true blessedness.

Likewise, I have taken notice of the indispensable obligation there lies upon us, from the impotency of our natures, and the deceiveableness of earthly pleasures, to go immediately to God, and humbly implore the gracious influences of his holy Spirit ; that we may be able to cleanse our hearts of all vicious inclinations, and evil desires. That pious thoughts and good resolutions may take such place in our souls, as will not only enable

able us to remove all those prejudices which we have conceived against internal peace; but will also make us willing to lay hold, and ready to entertain, all those means which have a tendency to excite our diligence, and quicken our endeavours after true satisfaction of mind, with cheerfulness and delight.

I shall now proceed in the manner I proposed, which was to make such useful observations on the advantages that will accrue to us by learning this most comfortable lesson of contentment, as will excite our endeavours after it.

And the first observation that I shall make, will be this; that without contentment, that is, without being as perfectly satisfied as our present frail state will admit of, we can have no true comfort or real pleasure in this world; neither shall we have any inclination or leisure to prepare for the next.

For so long as we continue dissatisfied with that state or condition assigned us by providence, or are unwilling to submit to it, or acknowledge his absolute right to dispose of us in such a manner as his infinite and unerring wisdom knows is best and most fit for us; our minds must necessarily remain restless and uneasy, unwilling to perform either social or moral duties; and put quite besides that composed and resigned temper of soul, which is required of us in our addresses to the throne of grace.

These are some of the sad effects of discontent: If we would but calmly and seriously consider of them, we should find them sad indeed. For we not only lose the enjoyment of what we have in this life, by being anxious after what we have not; but we are also incapacitated for the performance of those duties which would gradually prepare us
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for the blessedness of the next; by the hurry and violence of our ungovernable passions after such things as will rather forward and increase, than lessen or abate the disquietude of our minds; but can never afford us any real comfort or satisfaction, when under any of the calamities and evils with which we are surrounded.

Again, sober reflections on the miserable condition of such persons who know no pleasures superiour to those of sense, are enough to convince us of the folly and unhappiness of all those who are carried away with the fluctuating pleasures thereof, and are so eager in their pursuits after such things, as experience proves to us, have it not in their power to satisfy the desires of their minds; that they are become quite strangers to intellectual delights; and their fondness of earthly things, has left them no taste or relish for heavenly things.

If unprejudiced reflections were made on these things, we should soon find the condition of such men to be miserable indeed; for their happiness always lies at a distance; and it never consists in what they have, but in what they have not. And the pleasures which they propose to themselves, are so precarious and uncertain, that they are not sure they shall ever enjoy them. But supposing they were certain to participate of those pleasures they so earnestly wish for, and unweariedly pursue after; yet, this they cannot be certain of, that they will not bring with them much more evil than good. For very often, the things that we have been the most desirous of, and the most solicitously concerned about; we have had the greatest reason to wish we had never given ourselves any trouble after them, nor contracted any acquaintance with them.

These considerations weighed impartially, would sufficiently discover the misery of the mind without contentment; and are enough to cure us of an inordinate love for the world; and to make us give over chasing after the empty, unsatisfactory and fleeting pleasures of life. Pleasures, that are always in our expectations great, and shine with the brightest lustre when at a distance; but lessen when we make a near approach to them; and are so far from answering the ideas we have formed of them, that if we happen to be possessed of them, they often vanish, and come to nothing.

In a word: Were the vanities of the world, and the instability of human affairs, with the bitter remembrance of the troubles and difficulties we have met with in a close pursuit after them, to make that deep impression on our minds as they ought; they would make us retreat from the world; and retire immediately into ourselves, and put us upon learning this divine and heavenly lesson; which would qualify us for any condition in life: And we should be brought to have such dispositions as would make us proof against all the hardships and disappointments thereof. A lesson which, if well learned, will make us happy in the worst circumstance; and without it we shall be but miserable in the best.

These observations do strongly prove the misery of the mind, without inward submission to the will of God; and that men are insensibly led on to pursue their own ruin, who have too great an intimacy with the world. For it unsettles their minds, makes them strangers to themselves, and forgetful of their Creator; and entirely destitute of those chaste and excellent pleasures which are peculiar to the soul of man.

2dly, I shall now make some observations on the happiness of the mind, with contentment:

Content

Content is the Gift of God ; and not the certain effect of any thing here below : And the value of it is too great to be bestowed on any, but such as do with submission and humility diligently seek for it, and patiently wait for it ; and are made truly sensible of its real worth and excellency. For it removes our uneasinesses, quiets our minds, reconciles us to every state of life, banishes all murmuring and distrustful thoughts of providence ; sets us above the reach of calumny or contempt makes the hardest yoke easy, and the heaviest burden light.

Whenever this divine gift is introduced into our hearts, we shall be no longer slaves to the allurements of the world ; nor can we be taken captive by any of its ensnaring charms ; but we shall be at full liberty to discharge those great duties of virtue and religion, which will render us highly acceptable to a gracious God, and every way pleasant and agreeable to all good men. Duties that will purify and refine our minds, and make them fit to dwell with immortal spirits ; and to have an eternal rest with angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

This heavenly gift, whenever we come to the enjoyment of it, will bring us to the free use of our reason, put us upon our guard, and make us watch against the sudden emotions of our minds ; that we shall not be so apt to break out into anger at every cross accident we may meet with ; nor be discomposed at every injury that may be offered us. For it will take off the roughness of our tempers, make our passions smooth and even ; and we shall be happy within ourselves, and a pleasure to all around us.

This virtuous disposition of mind, forms the soul for every condition in life ; and when it has got possession of our hearts, we shall no longer be
inquiring

abroad after happiness; but looking for it where it is most likely to be found; that is, at home, within ourselves; and there we shall find our true happiness lies; we shall then experience, that all our searches for it in things without will ever prove vain and ineffectual.

We shall then discover the folly of placing our affections on the world; and the wisdom of looking with an indifferency on every thing here below: We shall then behold with delight the happiness of fixing our minds steadfastly on God, and depending intirely upon him for all the blessings we enjoy, or hope for; and humbly submitting ourselves to his good pleasure; for therein consists our truest interest and greatest felicity.

We shall then be thoroughly satisfied and easy with any state or condition, be it ever so mean; and not envious at the prosperity of others, be they ever so great: We shall become so firmly persuaded of God's goodness and protection, from the many instances we have had of his love, and his readiness to relieve us in our greatest dangers, that we shall fear no evils. But in all our distresses we shall have recourse to him for succour; and in the time of the heaviest affliction, we shall fly immediately to him for refuge; not doubting but in his good time we shall have a happy deliverance, or meet with seasonable relief, that will keep us from sinking under the weight of them.

Finally, The contented man looks upon sin as the worst of evils; and dreads nothing so much as its fatal consequences. He is sensible that it will lie like a heavy weight upon the mind, and press down the soul, that it cannot soar aloft: It will spoil all his pleasures, and shorten all his enjoyments. As to this world, he looks upon it as really what it is, the seat of disappointments; therefore he takes things as he finds them, and
though

though he is assured he shall meet with much rough way, bad weather, ill treatment from wicked and designing men, many insults from rude passengers as he passes along in the road of life ; and for no other reason, but because he is inflexibly resolved not to leave the narrow and sure path of Virtue, to walk in the broad and slippery way of Vice ; remembring, that it cannot be long before he shall be at his journey's end. For death like the friendly angel which delivered St *Peter* out of prison, will release his immortal spirit, and set it free from his tabernacle of earth ; and then it will take its flight into the glorious realms of light and immortality ; where it shall dwell in an uninterrupted state of bliss ; and his days of mourning shall be over : His wearied soul shall for ever enjoy an eternal rest, in the presence of that God who shall *wipe away all tears from his eyes, and remove every sorrow from his heart ; pain and sickness, sorrow and crying, shall be no more. The sun shall not scorch him by day, nor the moon freeze him by night. For the Lord God will be his everlasting light and life, and he shall reign with him for ever and ever.*

This is the true foundation of a Christian's comfort and support ; in the midst of all the troubles and calamities which he meets with here and below, he can look up to an eternity of joy and unmixed pleasures above.

I have now done with what I proposed : And if these observations were impregnated with a divine warmth on our hearts, we should no longer put off the learning this great and important lesson ; but immediately set about it, assiduously apply ourselves, to it, with a firm resolution of persevering in it, till we have truly *learned in whatsoever state we are in, to be therewith content.*

To

To conclude : *Let us who are of the day, be sober* ; that is, let us, who enjoy the glorious light of the gospel, provoke not God to withdraw it from us, by depreciating his beneficence ; or reviling his administration in the government of the world ; or murmuring, or complaining of his providence, for not humouring us in our wickedness, and indulging us in our extravagancies. But if we would have this great and invaluable blessing continued to us, let us often call to mind the inconceivable greatness of God's love in bestowing it on us ; who were always acting in direct opposition to him, and living in open rebellion against him ; and then, instead of reproaching his providence, or calling in question his wisdom and goodness, we shall see the greatest reason to reverence and adore him, for shewing the most compassionate and tender regard for our spiritual and eternal welfare, when we took none for ourselves ; and for sparing us, who justly deserved to be punished, when he might have cut us off in the midst of our grievous crimes, and repeated provocations ; and have commanded us immediately to appear before him, at his judgment seat.

In fine : Let us humbly submit ourselves to God, and we shall find that nothing will turn more to our advantage than an entire submission to his will, and an universal obedience to his laws ; acknowledging his justice in all his proceedings with us ; then may we depend upon him without fear, and rely upon him without any danger of being deceived. He bears an everlasting love to us, and is always concerned for our present and future felicity. God is an immutable Being, and in all his purposes of goodness, unchangeable ; *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever* ; therefore, whoever cheerfully resigns himself to the will of the Almighty, and is content with that station his
provi-

providence has placed him in, shall have the *eternal God for his refuge, and underneath him will be his everlasting arms*; that will keep him from falling into the midst of those many evils with which he is surrounded; and preserve him from becoming a prey to the fury of his enemies.

Let us remember the shortness of life; the certainty of death; and that it cannot be long before the King of Terrors will be upon us, and summon us immediately to appear before the awful tribunal of God. Let us frequently reflect on the miseries of those, who shall be found at that day to have forfeited their right to his favour, and have lost their title to that happiness which will endure for ever; by speaking contemptuously of his providence, or impeaching his justice; questioning his goodness, or casting contempt on his wise and just administration.

If our hearts were really affected with these things, we should the more readily acquiesce in obedience to the divine will, then would our affections soon be disengaged from the world; and we should be more in earnest seeking after God, continually imploring his favour, and endeavouring to obtain his grace; that we might be able to mortify all our corrupt actions, and subdue every disorderly passion that may stand in our way, to obstruct our motions, or retard our progress in the christian life. Such thoughts as these would fix in our minds a just sense of our frail and uncertain state, as well as the impotency and weakness of our natures, if attended to; so as would make us truly sensible, that the strongest efforts we are capable of making towards obtaining inward peace and tranquillity of soul, without the divine concurrence, will ever prove fruitless and unsuccessful.

There-

Therefore let us, in a firm persuasion of God's goodness, and a just sense of our unworthiness, address ourselves to him, humbly beseeching him to pardon our sins, and to cleanse our souls from the defilements of them, with the blood of his son; that these implacable enemies of our peace, may be washed away; then we need not doubt but God will freely bestow upon us the powerful and quickning influences of his grace; by which we shall not only be enabled to pass through this vale of misery, with a degree of pleasure and delight; but also at the end of it, he will conduct us safely into that everlasting Kingdom of rest and peace, where we shall be fix'd in a tabernacle of unmix'd pleasures, by the Captain of our salvation, who will place us beyond the reach of dangers; preserve us from all evil, and keep us safe under his protection, that we may be carried through the boundless circle of divine delights to all eternity. I shall now close this discourse with an excellent collect of our church.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise: that so among the fundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

S E L E C T

SELECT
FORMS of PRAYER,
For the USE of
PRIVATE FAMILIES,
AND
PARTICULAR PERSONS,
Extracted from the
Liturgy of the CHURCH of
E N G L A N D,
AND OTHER
BOOKS of DEVOTION.

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Ejaculatory Sentences.



UR help cometh from thee, O Lord! who hast made heaven and earth.

Comfort the souls of thy servants; for unto thee, O Lord! do we lift up our souls.

In thee do we put our trust all the day long; let us not be confounded.

Gracious is the Lord and righteous: yea our God is merciful.

Turn again then unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath rewarded thee.

I found trouble and heaviness, and I called upon the name of the Lord: O Lord! I beseech thee deliver my Soul.

The righteous cry and the Lord heareth them, and saveth them out of all their troubles.

Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord Jehovah, and blessed are the folk that he hath chosen to himself to be his Inheritance.

The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped.

I will be glad and rejoyce in thy mercy, for thou hast consider'd my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversities.

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My soul shall make her boast in the Lord : the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.

For the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, whose name is holy, and who dwells in the high and holy place does not disdain to dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to relieve the hearts of the sorrowful ones.

A Prayer for Contentment.

O Lord! root out of my soul all that original corruption which is the fountain of all evils; cleanse by thy holy Spirit that impure heart, from whence proceeded all wicked thoughts, and evil desires. Learn me, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. Let me envy no one his gifts or possessions. Keep me from a worldly, and a covetuous heart. Let me ever remember, that godliness with contentment is great gain: and that it is my duty to be satisfied, if I have only food and raiment. And even though I should sometimes want these; suffer me not to murmur against thy divine providence; nor attempt to procure them by unlawful means; but patiently wait on thee, in humble and constant Prayer: And thus do thou, most gracious God! write all thy divine laws in my heart; for the sake of Jesus Christ, my blessed Lord and Saviour.
Amen.

A Prayer

*A Prayer for fixing the mind steadfastly on
God.*

ALmighty God ! who art the only and supreme happiness of the soul of man ; without the enjoyment of whom, she must for ever dwell in disquietude and trouble ; fix all the thoughts and affections of my soul upon thee, who alone canst satisfy all her desires, and give her a peace that passeth all understanding. I have sufficiently experienced the incapacity of all earthly enjoyments, to make me happy ; and the desires, of my soul after them return back into my breast empty, or dissatisfied with those many disappointments they have met with ; and are still craving something beyond all the pleasures of this life, to fill my appetites with perfect satisfaction.—Nothing but thee, and the enjoyment of thee, is able to do this. O ! let my thoughts, my desires, and all the affections of my soul, meet with unspeakable satisfaction in thee, the only Author and Fountain of happiness, Let them soar above the sordid and empty pleasures of this world ; and wing my soul in its flight upwards to that perfect state of bliss, where thou shalt communicate thyself to her, in such measures of thy Spirit, that she shall have nothing more to desire ; nothing to disappoint her appetites ; nothing to make her uneasy ; but thou shalt be all in all ; and the sight of thee, and thy glory be her greatest and endless happiness, to all eternity. *Amen.*

*A Prayer to enable us to place all our Trust
and Confidence in God.*

WE humbly beseech thee, O Father ! mercifully to look upon our infirmities ; and for the glory of thy name, turn from us all those evils

evils that we most righteously have deserved ; and grant, that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy ; and evermore serve thee, in holiness and pureness of living ; to thy honour and glory ; through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer to God for removing the Evils we feel, and preventing those we fear.

O God, merciful Father ! that despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart ; nor the desires of such as be sorrowful ; Mercifully assist our Prayers that we make before thee, in all troubles and adversities, whensoever they oppress us : and graciously hear us, that those evils which the craft and subtilty of the devil, or man worketh against us, be brought to nought ; and by the providence of thy goodness they may be dispersed ; that we thy servants being hurt by no persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto thee in thy holy church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Grace, to enable us to withstand Temptations.

A Lmighty God ! in whose hands are the hearts of men ; and from whom cometh every good and perfect Gift ; in mercy look down upon us, who of ourselves cannot do any thing that is good without thee : Thou knowest what we are, and remembrest whereof we are made ; and how apt we are to forget it : Let thy goodness supply all our defects ; and thy mercy help our infirmities : make us such masters of our passions, that
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the harshest dispensations of thy providence, may never be uneasy to us ; nor any provocations from men, ever hurry us to rage or impatience ; but amidst the many severe trials we meet with here, teach us to preserve a calm and easy temper ; a spirit serene and gentle, and easy to be entreated. Root out that pride and vanity that cleaves so close to our corrupted natures ; and give us that meek and humble temper of mind, that will be of great price in the sight of thee, our God ! And render us useful and acceptable unto men. Give us such a sense of thy wisdom, and our own folly, that we may always think those circumstances best for us that thou appointest ; and the worst condition we can be in, much better than we deserve ; that we may entirely resign ourselves to thy will and conduct ; and be content in whatsoever state thou art pleased to place us in. Finally we beseech thee, that thou wouldst not suffer the temptations of intemperance to prevail upon us ; nor our appetites ever to ensnare us : Do thou teach us sobriety and moderation ; and so constantly assist us, that amidst all the allurements to riot and excess, our bodies may be preserved pure and undefiled, as temples of the holy Ghost ; for the sake of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Peace.

O God from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed ; Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give ; that doth our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee, we being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer

A Prayer for Acceptance with God.

O God! the strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our Prayers; and because, through the weakness of our mortal natures, we can do no good thing without thy assistance; grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandment we may please thee both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Grace, to enable us to withstand Temptations.

O Lord! we beseech thee give us grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and with a pure heart and mind to follow thee, the only true God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Confession.

A Lmighty God! Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We do acknowledge and desire to bewail our manifold sins and wickednesses, which we from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine Majesty; provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do sincerely repent; and desire to be heartily sorry for these our misdoings; that the remembrance of them may be grievous unto us, for the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father! for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee, in newness;

newness of life to the honour and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Pardon of Sin.

O Lord ! we beseech thee, mercifully hear our prayers ; and spare all those who confess their sins unto thee ; that they whose consciences by sin are accused, by thy merciful pardon, may be absolved ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Morning Prayer for a Family.

O Lord God ! that hearest Prayers, and art nigh to all them that call upon thee in faith ; having thy ears open to a world of creatures, that continually depend upon thee ! As we are moved by our own necessities, so are we encouraged by the daily experience of thy mercies, still to shelter ourselves under the shadow of thy wings ; and to continue our supplications at the throne of Grace. And we beg of thee, who fashionest all the hearts of the sons of men ; that thou wilt prepare our souls to come into thy holy presence ; and to call upon thy blessed name, in a manner due and acceptable. O ! Pour upon us the Spirit of grace, and of supplication : And let thy good Spirit help our infirmities, and teach us to pray ; and to ask such things as are every way agreeable to thy will, and most advantageous to our souls.

We have taken upon us to speak unto thee, the sovereign Majesty of heaven and earth ; we who are but sinful dust and ashes ; that have too just cause to be afraid, lest our great and manifold sins should provoke thee to hide thy face from us, and to shut up thy loving kindness in displeasure

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against

against us : For we have done foolishly, and wickedly, in not hearkning to the calls of thy word ; nor obeying the motions of thy Spirit. Our iniquities are increased over our heads ; our sins are become a sore burden ; too grievous and heavy for us to bear. They are infinite in number ; for which if thou, O Lord ! shouldst enter into judgment with us, we could not answer thee one of a thousand : But must lay our hands upon our mouths and plead nothing but guilty ! having our whole dependance upon thy mercy.

O God ! be merciful to us, miserable sinners ; for his sake whom thou hast exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance to thy people, and forgiveness of their sins : Be merciful to us, we pray thee, and heal our souls, that have greatly sinned against thee. O ! heal our backslidings ; renew our repentance ; confirm our hearts in thy true fear and love ; and establish our goings in thy holy ways ; that we may not be so wavering, and inclinable to turn from our duty, after thou, in great mercy, hast spoken peace to our souls ; but may go on conquering, and to conquer, all the enemies of our salvation, till they shall be intirely bruised under our feet.

O thou God of all Grace ! bring such thoughts to our minds, and fix such considerations, so powerfully on our hearts, as thou knowest most effectual to prevail with us to do thy will ; and to keep us in the performance of our duty ; till thou receive us into the blessed kingdom of thy glory : And in the mean time, sanctify to us all thy dealings with us. Bless us in all our undertakings, and in all conditions of life : Make us humble in an high estate ; contended in a low one ; and duly careful of our souls in all ; following after things now, which will bring us true peace and comfort at the last.

Dispose

Dispose of us, we beseech thee, our God! and of all that concerns us this day, to the glory of thy name. O! keep us at all times, and in all places and companies, from the evil of sin; and from all other evils, to which the greatness of our sins do make us liable. And take thou, O heavenly Father! the gracious charge, guidances and government of us; and so lead us here in all our ways with thy counsel, that hereafter thou mayst receive us into thy glory, through thy tender mercies, and our Saviour's abundant merits; in whose own words, we beg all things needful for ourselves and others at thy hands:

Our Father, &c.

Evening Prayer for a Family.

O Lord, the great and glorious God! infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and preserver, Ruler and Disposer of us, and of all the world; Thou hast created all things by thine almighty hand, and orderest all that thou hast made, by thy wise and righteous providence; and thy mercy is everlasting, and over all thy works. O! who is able to express or conceive the exceeding riches of that grace and goodness of the Lord, which in such a plentiful measure does still descend upon frail sinful creatures, who deserve nothing from thee, but to be severely punished by thee! This day, O Lord! we have tasted largely of thy mercy, and lived altogether upon thy fatherly care and bounty. But notwithstanding thy patience, and all the repeated pledges of thy favour and kindness to us; O how ill have we requited thy love! What unsuitable returns have we made for all thine unspeakable mercies vouchsafed unto us! We are
amazed

amazed at the multitude of our sins, that we have committed against the light and teachings of thy gospel; against the dictates and strivings of thy Spirit, and the love and sufferings of thy Son; against all the patience and long forbearance which thou hast exercised towards us; and against the many methods and mercies which thou, from time to time, hast made use of, in order to make us such as thy word requires we should be. O Lord! we have given thee so great provocation, that we are afraid lest thou shouldst forsake us utterly, and cause the day of thy patience to be at an end with us; and grant us no more of the grace which we have so greatly abused; no more of the holy Spirit, that we have so frequently resisted. And what have we now but judgment to expect from thee, O Lord! but that thy mercy rejoices over judgment; and thy word assures us, that thou delightest not in the death of sinners; but rather that they should turn to thee, and live. Therefore thou leavest us these opportunities to appear before thee; to plead with our God for the everlasting life of our souls, that have sinned against thee. And what have we to plead, O blessed Lord! but thine own gracious goodness, and merciful inclinations to save returning penitents? Thou hast sent thine only son to be our almighty Saviour: and he that did no sin, was manifested to take away our sins. For his sake, be thou pleased to spare us, and forgive us. Turn away thy wrath from us: receive us to thy favour; and comfort us with a well-grounded persuasion, that our many and great sins are pardoned.

And because, such is the frailty of our nature, that without thy Grace we cannot do any thing that is good; O! grant us the help of thy divine power,

power, and such assistance of thy blessed Spirit, as may fortify us against all temptations; and make us diligent and faithful in thy service. And be pleased, O Lord! to manifest thyself to our souls, and make such discoveries to us of thy will, that we may have a right knowledge of thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Give us power from on high, to enable us to perform our duty according to that degree of light which thou hast pleased to impart unto us; that we may not hold the truth in unrighteousness: but may walk as children of the light, and of the day. Let us not only be *almost*, but *altogether* such as thou wouldst have us to be. Then shall we have cause to give thee praise and glory to all eternity.

Which things we beg not only for ourselves, but for all who are partakers of the same common nature with us; especially for thy whole Church, wheresoever dispersed, or howsoever distressed, over the face of the whole earth: for our sovereign Lord King GEORGE, and all the Royal Family; for our Rulers and Counsellors; for our Ministers and Teachers; for our Relations and Neighbours; our Friends and Benefactors; and for all thy afflicted servants; whatsoever their trials and troubles may be. O! supply all their wants, and fulfil all their desires, as is most agreeable to thy heavenly wisdom; for thy mercy's sake, in Christ Jesus.

Thou, Lord! art the great Preserver of men; who hast blessed us this day, and all our days: praised be thy name for all thy goodness, which we have so long experienced. Make us sensible how greatly we are obliged to thee. Take care of us, O Lord! and be good to us this night: give us comfortable repose in our beds, and everlasting rest in our souls, in thyself. And be thou our God and Guide: Our Hope and Help: Our
Joy

Joy and Comfort ; and all in all to us, this night
and for evermore. *Amen.*

The general Thanksgiving.

ALmighty God Father of all mercies, we
thine unworthy servants do give the most
humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness
and loving kindness to us, and to all men. We
bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all
the blessings of this life ; but above all, for thine
inestimable love in the redemption of the world,
by our Lord Jesus Christ ; for the means of grace ;
and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee,
give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that
our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful ; and
that we may shew forth thy praise, not only with
our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves
to thy service ; and by walking before thee in ho-
liness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus
Christ our Lord ; to whom with thee and the holy
Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end.
Amen.

A Prayer for Contrition.

ALmighty and everlasting God ! who hatest
nothing that thou hast made ; and dost
forgive the sins of all them that are penitent ;
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts ;
that we worthily lamenting our sins, and ac-
knowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of
thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and
forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A Prayer

A Prayer for Sanctification.

O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God! vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer very proper to be used at the conclusion of either Morning or Evening Prayer.

O Almighty God! who hast promised to hear the petitions of them that ask in thy Son's name; we beseech thee mercifully to incline thine ears to us, that have made now our prayers and supplications unto Thee; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to thy will, may effectually be obtained to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

MIDNIGHT HYMN,

The words by a LADY.

I.

(grieve;

NO more Oh then! my soul at disappointments
 Can flowing tears my fate controul,
 Or sighs my woes relieve;
 Adversity is virtue's school
 To those who right discern,
 Let me observe each painful rule,
 And each hard lesson learn.

II.

When winter's clouds obscure the sky,
 And heaven the earth deform;
 If fix'd the strong foundation lie,
 The castle braves the storm.
 Thus fix'd on faith's unfailing rock,
 Let me endure a while;
 Misfortune's rude impetuous shock,
 And glory in my toil.

III.

Ill fortune cannot always last,
 Oh! tho' it should remain;
 Yet I each painful moment haste
 A better world to gain,
 Where calamities no more shall wound,
 Nor faithless friends destroy;
 Where innocence and truth are crown'd,
 With never-fading joy.

IV.

Tumultuous days and restless nights,
 The guilty ever knows;
 A stranger to the calm delights,
 Of study and repose.
 Keep me from envy care and strife,
 Guard me ye powers divine;
 And pleas'd when ye demand my life,
 I may that life resign.



